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Klan Hall Fire Sentences Eased

RALEIGH, N. C. (AP) — Five Negro youths sentenced to 12 years in prison for setting fire to an empty Ku Klux Klan meeting hall received suspended sentences yesterday by order of Gov. Bob Scott.

Damage to the hall was estimated at \$100.

The building in Benson was set afire a week after the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. in April, 1968, and after Klansmen brandishing firearms had driven through a Negro section of the eastern North Carolina city.

The sentences imposed by Superior Court Judge William Bickett brought strong protests from many individuals and groups across the state. The judge was quoted in June as saying, "I don't mind admitting I might have made a bad judgment, a mistake.